AUBURN UNIVERSITY
College of Education

Grief Information Letter

A Look Within: A Qualitative Exploration of Counselors-in-Training's Grief Training Experience and Perceived Preparedness to Provide Counseling for Disenfranchised Grief

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Briana Dalton under the supervision of Dr. Chippewa Thomas in the Auburn University Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling. You are invited to participate in a research study titled "A Look Within: A Qualitative Exploration of Counselors-in-Training's Grief Training Experience and Perceived Preparedness to Provide Counseling for Disenfranchised Grief." You were selected as a possible participant because you are a master's student in a CACREP-accredited counseling program currently completing practicum or internship requirements. The study will aim to assess counselors-in-training's perception of their grief training and perceived preparedness to support grieving clients experiencing disenfranchised or invalidated grief. Participation is completely voluntary and participants have the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time during the process.

What will be involved if you participate? If you voluntarily decide to participate in this research study, you may be asked to participate in an individual semi-structured interview with the researcher. Completion of the Qualtrics screening survey and contact information form accessed through the QR code does not guarantee you will be contacted to complete an interview. The expected time commitment for the interview is 45-60 minutes. During the interview, the researcher will ask you to answer demographic questions and your responses will be recorded on an electronicform by the researcher. You will then engage in a discussion with the researcher initiated to understand your grief training experiences. The extent of the discussion will be at a level at which you are comfortable. The interview will be transcribed utilizing audio recording. The purpose of the audio recording is for the researcher to later identify themes that were discussed during the interview. The transcription will be peer reviewed to ensure the researcher has accurately identified themes from participant responses. Participant names will be replaced with pseudonyms on the transcript for coding and participant confidentiality. . Your participation in the interview is expected to take no more than one hour of your time.

Are there any risks or discomforts? There are minimal risks associated with your participation in the study. Your responses will be coded using pseudonyms; therefore, your name and other

identifying information will not be associated with your responses. This prevents institutional risks as your program's faculty will not know what responses you have provided unless **you** directly shared your thoughts with them after your participation in the study. The study asks you to recall any experiences with grieving clients experiencing disenfranchise grief. This discussion could trigger recall of vicarious trauma of client's narrative if traumatization occurred. Additionally, the study asks you to consider your own preparedness and training for grief work. This could inadvertently lead to feelings of anxiety or self-doubt. To minimize the potential for emotional or psychological risks, you are not required to answer any questions that feel uncomfortable. You are free to pause or end your participation in the study at any time. If requested, a list of referrals to mental health professionals in your local area can be provided. Due to the use of interviews to conduct this qualitative study, there is a risk of breach of confidentiality. This risk will be mitigated by enforcing a waiting room for the Zoom meeting. This ensures that the researcher and participant are the only individuals virtually present during the virtual meeting. Additionally, participants and researcher are required to complete the interview in a private location. To protect participant confidentiality, participants will be assigned a pseudonym to assist in de-identifying and coding interview responses. Information collected during the interview will be used to meet the researcher's dissertation requirements and submit journal publications and presentations. Identifying quotes and information will not be included in either of the forementioned written and verbal presentations of the study.

Will you receive compensation for participating?
After the completion of the interview, you will receive a $20 Amazon e-gift card. The e-gift card will be delivered to you via email at the conclusion of the study. E-gift cards will be received by November 30, 2026. Your email address will not be stored or associated with interview responses. If you choose to withdraw from the interview process at any time, you will still qualify to receive the $20 e-gift card.

Are there any costs associated with my participation?
There are no direct costs associated with your participation in the study. Interviews are conducted via video conferencing which requires access to functional technology (i.e. computer, internet access, tablet, phone).

Your privacy will be protected.
During the interview you will be asked to share your preferred name with the interviewer to allow her to reference you during the interview. During the transcription process, your name will be replaced with a non-identifying pseudonym. You will be asked to identify your program discipline; however, you will not be asked to identify your program. You will be asked to identify your ACES region but will not be asked to disclose your city or state. At the conclusion

of the study, all electronic documents including the demographic form completed by the researcher during the interview will be stored securely in an encrypted secure Auburn University Box folder , and audio recordings/transcripts will be stored securely in a separate encrypted secure Auburn University Box folder..

It is important for you to be aware of the exceptions to confidentiality with this study. If a participant discloses intent to harm self or others or discloses ongoing abuse/neglect of a minor or dependent adult, the researcher may be mandated to inform appropriate authorities, breaking confidentiality. The researcher is trained to keep information regarding your participation in the study confidential. However, you are welcome to share your experiences as a participant in the study with people of your choosing.

Information obtained through your participation in the study will be included in a written dissertation document written by the researcher. This study is a qualitative study and due to the nature of qualitative research, representative de-identified quotes from the interview may be included in a dissertation document and/or presentation.

Upon completion of the interview process, information obtained through your participation in the study may be presented in a professional setting such as a conference and/or used in a professional publication (i.e. journal article, dissertation publication). The researcher will carefully omit any quotes that contain identifying information or could be personally identifying.

If you have questions about this study, please ask them prior to your participation in the study by contacting the researcher, Briana Dalton via email (BZL0090@auburn.edu). You may also contact the faculty research advisor, Dr. Chippewa Thomas, at thoma07@auburn.edu. **If you have questions about your rights as a research participant,** you can contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance or the Auburn University Institutional Review Board by phone (334)-844-5966 or email at IRBadmin@auburn.edu.. Thank you for your consideration in participating in this research study.

Best regards,
Briana Dalton, MS, LPC



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